

HUT NEWS

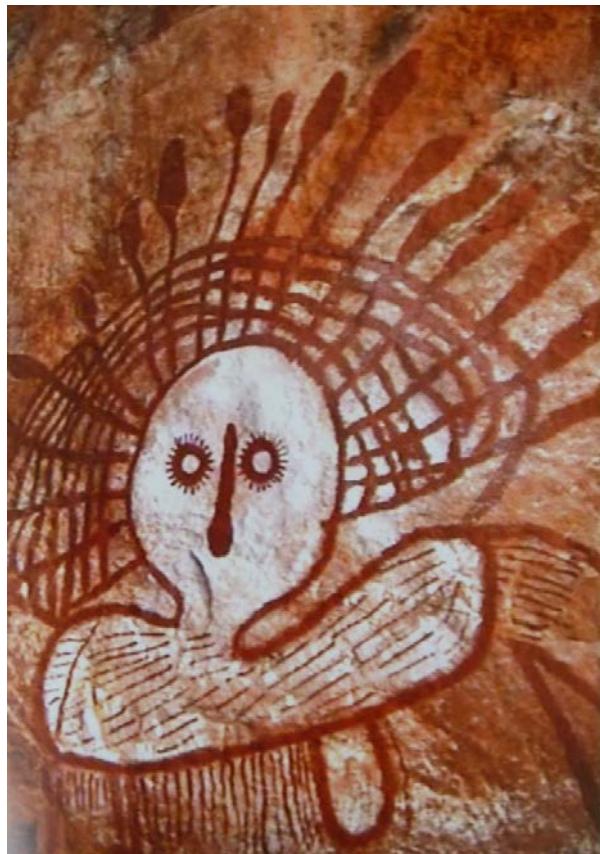
Issue No. 345
March 2017



"Nature Conservation Saves for Tomorrow"

The Society's Annual General Meeting
will be held at the
Conservation Hut, Wentworth Falls
on Thursday 30 March 2017, at 7PM

(See Notice of Annual General Meeting on page 2)



Take a role in the work of the Society

At our AGM on Thursday 30 March we will elect a management committee for the year from 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018. All positions, including those in which the incumbent intends to renominate, will fall vacant, and there are other jobs to be done, on subcommittees, helping with campaigns, events and special projects. No experience is necessary, just a willingness to help the Blue Mountains environment.

With this newsletter and at http://bluemountains.org.au/documents/aboutus/2017duties_and_responsibilities.pdf you will find details of the duties and responsibilities of all management positions. Whilst our constitution allows for nominations to be received on the night of the AGM, we really need to be organised beforehand to ensure that there will be at least one nomination for each position.

Please contact Don Morison or Tara Cameron (contact details on page 2) if you want to discuss any of the positions or wish to be nominated. Or you can download a nomination form at http://bluemountains.org.au/documents/aboutus/Nomination_Form_2017.pdf

Following our Annual General Meeting
"Mysteries of Kimberley Rock Art"
a presentation by Dr Alan Lane

(starting at 7.45 pm on Thursday 30 March)

When Dr Alan Lane retired as a Senior Principal Research Scientist with CSIRO, he embarked on a variety of adventures including studies of frogs and platypus, trekking across the Simpson Desert, caretaking the Northern Hairy-nose Wombat sanctuary in Central Queensland and, with his wife Virginia, living in France for nine months learning to speak French. He has coordinated the Popes Glen Bushcare Group in Blackheath since founding it in 1992.

In September 2016, Alan had the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to travel with a group of Climate Council supporters to the Kimberley led by Prof Tim Flannery and Dr Tim Willing, studying some rare and recently discovered rock art.

At our meeting on Thursday 30 March, Alan will present a rich photographic tour of the rock art seen on his recent trip to the Kimberley and will discuss possible interpretations of the instantly recognisable "wanjina" ("wandjina") and "gyion" ("Bradshaw") art forms.

A highlight is a painting recently discovered by Tim Willing of a Thylacoleo (marsupial lion), not previously seen by any other group and described by Prof Flannery as perhaps the most scientifically important rock art in Australia.

Alan will also show delightful ancient images of a variety of wildlife and mythical monsters, as well as a snapshot of the remarkable Kimberley landscape and wildlife.

Image: "Who or what is 'wandjina'?"

[documents/aboutus/Nomination_Form_2017.pdf](http://bluemountains.org.au/documents/aboutus/Nomination_Form_2017.pdf) and send to Blue Mountains Conservation Society, bmcs@bluemountains.org.au or PO Box 29, Wentworth Falls 2782 to arrive before 25 March 2017.

At this time, we do not have candidates for the following important positions:

- Publicity Officer
- Events Coordinator
- Sustainability Officer
- Threatened Species Officer

Subcommittees are: Land Use; Environmental Education; Events; Plant Nursery; Gardens of Stone and Western Escarpment. New volunteers are welcome.

Please consider taking a role in the Society. There is plenty of work to be done to preserve our beautiful natural environment. Whatever you can do will make a difference to the health and wellbeing of the Blue Mountains, its plants and creatures.

"Hut News", the newsletter of Blue Mountains Conservation Society Inc.
 P.O. Box 29, Wentworth Falls, 2782
 Phone 4757 1872 (leave message)
 Email: bmcs@bluemountains.org.au
 Web page: www.bluemountains.org.au

Facebook: Blue Mountains Conservation Society **Twitter:** bmcsnsw

President: Don Morison 8230 2116 president@bluemountains.org.au

Senior Vice President: Tara Cameron 04198 24974 taracameron4@gmail.com

Second Vice President: Madi Maclean mlhmaclean@bigpond.com

Treasurer: Bart Beech 4739 9947 bart.beech@schnieder-electric.com

Administration Officer: Jeanette Robertson sao@bluemountains.org.au

Bushcare Officer: Paul Vale 4787 8080 04290 14454 bushcare@bluemountains.org.au

Environmental Education Officer: Beth Rohrlach: 04247 32287 BethRohrlach@yahoo.com.au

General Meetings Convenor: Vacant

Landuse Officer: Angela Langdon 0417 004 722 landuse@bluemountains.org.au

Meetings Secretary: Heather Hull 4739 1493 hhull001@bigpond.net.au

Membership Secretary: Ross Coster 4739 2987 04184 62576 membership@bluemountains.org.au

National Parks/World Heritage Officer: Brian Marshall 4784.1148 briannamar@bigpond.com

Newsletter Editor: Christine Davies 4787 7246 hutnews@bluemountains.org.au

Plant Nursery Manager: Sue Nicol 4787.8887 nursery@bluemountains.org.au

Publicity Officer:
Sustainable Population and Climate Change Officer: VACANT

Threatened Species Officer: Nakia Belmer 04143 44741 bayern11@tpg.com.au

Website Manager: Valda Low webmaster@bluemountains.org.au

Walks Convenor: Maurice Kerkham 4739 4942 mauricekerkham@hotmail.com

Project Officer-Events: Rob Baigent 4759 3104 rob.baigent@bigpond.com

Project Officer-Gardens of Stone: Madi Maclean mlhmaclean@bigpond.com

Bushfire Representative: Hugh Paterson 4751.2303, mob 04275 12303 fmatter@bigpond.net.au

The **DEADLINE** for the next issue of HUT NEWS is
18 MARCH 2017

Christine Davies, 4787 7246
hutnews@bluemountains.org.au
 PO Box 29, Wentworth Falls 2782

MEMBERSHIP ENQUIRIES

Ross Coster
 02 4739 2987 0418 462 576
membership@bluemountains.org.au
 PO Box 29, Wentworth Falls 2782

Blue Mountains Conservation Society Inc

Notice of Annual General Meeting

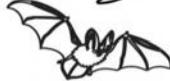
Notice is hereby given of the **Annual General Meeting of Blue Mountains Conservation Society** to be held at the **Conservation Hut, Fletcher Street, Wentworth Falls at 7 PM on Thursday 30 March 2017**.

Business will include receipt of reports, adoption of annual accounts, determination of structure of Management Committee, election of President, Management Committee members and other office holders and appointment of auditor.

By order of the Management Committee
Blue Mountains Conservation Society Inc
3 March 2017

BLUE MOUNTAINS BAT NIGHT

FREE EVENT !!



IT'S A BAT FEST!!

Bat cave for the kids

Bat talks

Bat films

Bat walks (bring torches)



When: Friday 10th March at 6.30pm onwards

Where: NPWS Heritage Centre, Govetts Leap Rd, Blackheath

This event is supported by Blue Mountains Conservation Society, Blue Mountains City Council, NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service, Greater Sydney Local Land Services, the Australian Government's National Landcare Program and the Australasian Bat Society.

Enquiries: NPWS, Heritage Centre, Blackheath (02) 4787 8877

Elphinstone (Radiata) Plateau Campaign Underway

On Monday 20th February the NSW Land and Environment Court held an on-site hearing on the three proposed dwellings currently lodged for Elphinstone (Radiata) Plateau – the hearing then continued in Sydney on Tuesday 21st February.

The outcome won't be known for some time, but regardless of the decision the Society has begun its campaign for the Plateau to be purchased by the State or Commonwealth government, to form part of the Blue Mountains National Park, ensuring it is conserved forever and that public access continues.

The campaign committee is working closely with the community to create a major awareness-raising campaign that will generate greater understanding of the environmental and recreational values of the Plateau and lobby the Government to secure its future. We are planning a dedicated website and extensive use of social media. We are also planning an exciting event to launch the campaign.

Want to be involved? We need all the help we can get! You can be involved as little or as much as you want – from writing a letter to assisting with campaign events. Email the Society at landuse@bluemountains.org.au

PUBLICITY OFFICER WANTED

The Society needs a Publicity Officer—can you help?

Promotes and publicises BMCS activities and issues; Maintains key media contacts; Prepares media releases; Works with Management Committee members and subcommittees to prepare publicity; Manages BMCS social media and does E-blasts.



Protect the Gardens of Stone

"Say NO to open cut mining!"

Just sixteen months after Springvale Mine extension was approved for a further twelve years, Centennial is seeking to weaken the progressive reduction of salinity levels that were a condition of the approval. Springvale mine operates in and under Newnes Plateau, part of the unprotected area of the Gardens of Stone region.

The mine waste water discharges into the Coxs River which flows through the Greater Blue Mountains World heritage Area and into Lake Burragorang, Sydney's water supply.

Springvale's consent conditions set out a timetable for progressively cleaning up the discharge of mine waste water: with upper limits on salinity level to be met by 30 June 2017 (Condition 12). Centennial is seeking to remove the requirements to meet reduced salinity levels by 30 June 2017 and to delay eliminating acute and chronic toxicity to aquatic species by two years (30 June 2019 rather than 2017). The current high level of discharge can continue. The only target that would remain is a reduced salinity level (500 micro siemens/cm) by 30 June 2019.

The Springvale consent conditions were considered and strengthened by two independent Planning Assessment Commission reviews. These progressive improvements were imposed for the health of the river. During these

Springvale mine seeking to weaken pollution reduction

Madi Maclean

reviews Centennial advised the Environment Protection Authority it could meet these progressive targets.

In applying to have the conditions changed, Centennial argue that they should not have to meet these standards now as they will have a new water transfer and treatment process in place by 2019. While this is a good solution to the problem of the waste discharge, this water transfer scheme is yet to be approved and built so there are a lot of unknowns. If approved, it could, for instance, still be delayed or reduced in scale to meet funding constraints.

These progressive salinity reduction targets in the conditions of consent need to stay in place as long as Springvale mine continues to discharge highly saline toxic waste rather than treat it. It is up to the mine operator how they meet these targets. They should be retained so they are decreasing their mine waste discharge over time.

BMCS is doing a submission which will be available on our website at: <http://www.bluemountains.org.au/submissions.htm>

Read related articles: EPA raises serious concerns over Invincible Mine Southern extension (page 4); Date set for Clarence mine waste collapse prosecution (page 7); Appeal against decision on protecting Sydney's water supply (see below)

Nursery News

After the hot, wet, even tropical conditions over the summer our plants have produced amazing growth and have never looked more lush. We have a great range available at our markets. Hopefully the worst of the heat is over and planting in the coming weeks will establish plants well before the winter.

Amongst our big range at the markets, of special mention at the moment are many varieties of Correas which are about to flower. These are ideal for semi shade and are bird attracting. We have the native frangipani, *Hymenosporum flavum*, which makes a great feature tree. There are several species of Grevilleas and we have plenty of ferns which are always popular. We have some Gymea lilies for those who want a big statement in the garden and who have patience to wait a few years! For the specialist native plant collector we have a limited release of *Gompholobium uncinatum*. You'll have to order this one.

As my term as manager comes to an end we are discussing strategies and plans for a smooth transition so that the work of the nursery continues. If there is anyone out there who could contribute to the running of the nursery and would like to be a volunteer please contact me.

Sue Nicol 4787 8887
nursery@bluemountains.org.au



Correa reflexa. The flowers are bell shaped and up to 40mm long. They may be pale green, red, red with yellow or cream tips or a number of other variations. The flowers produce nectar and attract honey eating birds. Flowering is usually winter to early spring. Image source: Australian Native Plants Society (Australia)



Gompholobium uncinatum,
source NSW Flora Online,
National Herbarium of NSW,
Royal Botanic Garden, Sydney



Appeal against decision on protecting Sydney's water supply

Madi Maclean

A hearing date of 30 May has been set for the appeal against the Land and Environment Court's decision on Springvale mine. Last year conservation group, 4nature, challenged the approval of the Springvale mine extension which allowed the mine to discharge toxic and highly saline mine water into the Coxs River and Sydney's drinking supply.

The Land and Environment Court decided that the approval was consistent with the environmental laws. This meant that the planning policy to protect Sydney's drinking water was ineffective. 4nature are now appealing this decision.

Read related articles: Springvale mine seeking to weaken pollution reduction (page 3); EPA raises serious concerns over Invincible Mine Southern extension (page 4); Date set for Clarence mine waste collapse prosecution (page 7)



Sub-Economic Airport

The story so far:

The Australian Government has proposed a new airport at Badgerys Creek, called it Western Sydney Airport (WSA) to make us all feel part of it, exaggerated the 'jobs and growth' that may result to get councils and business all excited, drafted an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), ignored submissions on the Draft EIS, then released and approved a Final EIS. The project is now with Sydney Airport Corporation (SYD).

Under an agreement with the Howard Government back when Kingsford Smith Airport (KSA) was privatised, SYD has 'first right of refusal' for any new airport built within 100 km of KSA. SYD has four months to decide if they want to build the new airport. They will need to spend (at least) \$5 billion over nine years, launch the airport in 2026 and increase passenger movements to make it profitable, all without cannibalising KSA.

SYD has already publicly stated that WSA is 'deeply sub-economic', which is company-speak for "it won't make a profit over the cost of debt needed to build it". SYD has also publicly stated that Sydney doesn't need a second Airport, as KSA has capacity for decades into the future.

The Australian Government has repeatedly stated that they won't contribute to the cost of WSA (aside from the nearly \$4 billion of road works they are paying for, including widening the Northern Road to six lanes from Penrith to Narellan and building a new motorway from the M7 to the Northern Road just to feed the airport).

So SYD has to fund, build and operate WSA itself, in competition with KSA, in the hope of making a profit in the late 2020's, with multiple changes of Government (and therefore rules) along the way.

The Government has done everything it can to promote the project, ensuring there is no curfew (so 24-hour operation can increase revenue), no fuel pipeline (lowering capital costs), and no railway line (increasing car-parking revenue).

I do not understand why the taxpayer is doing all of this for a private venture. Spending our money to prop up a 'deeply sub-economic' project in the hope of generating 'jobs and growth' in 10 years' time.

SYD appears to want the Government to do even more, including offering discount rate loans, or helping with funding the WSA construction costs.

Standard and Poor's have assessed the project and labelled it a "challenging investment proposition", which is ratings-agency-speak for "it won't make money".

If SYD decides not to build WSA, the project will go to tender, to see if anybody else wants to build a project that won't make money.

If the tender process fails, then the Australian Government will build the airport itself, launch it into

Ross Coster, NO WSA Subcommittee

operation in 2026, then privatise it, using the WestConnex 'capital recycling' method of getting deeply unpopular and un-economic projects built.

We have opposed the airport on many grounds over the past two years (and several decades), only to find out that the project is a sub-economic dud.

Why would a government partially fund a project that is not needed, is not wanted, will not make money, and will ruin millions of people's lives? I just don't get it.

If you are with me on this, write to SYD and tell them what you think:

Kerrie Mather, Sydney Airport CEO, Locked Bag 5000, Sydney International Terminal, NSW 2020

Ross Coster
nwsa@bluemountains.org.au



EPA raises serious concerns over Invincible Mine Southern extension

Madi Maclean

The EPA has said that the mine owner's Environmental Assessment for the open-cut Southern extension has serious deficiencies in relation to water issues. This extension is open-cut mining in the unprotected area of the Gardens of Stone region. It is also in part of the area that two independent Planning Assessment Commissions rejected open-cut mining for in 2014 and 2015.

The EPA has stated that the lack of fundamental data on groundwater from the adjacent old Ivanhoe mine is "a major deficiency" which should have been addressed before the environmental assessment was put on exhibition. As well, its conclusion that the extension would have "... negligible impacts on flows, water quality and water users is neither substantiated nor supported."

The proposal has attracted around 650 public submissions with just over half objecting.

Read related articles: Springvale mine seeking to weaken pollution reduction (page 3); Date set for Clarence mine waste collapse prosecution (page 7); Appeal against decision on protecting Sydney's water supply (page 3)

BMCS Management Committee positions:

SUSTAINABILITY OFFICER
THREATENED SPECIES OFFICER

What is your area of expertise? Please look at the descriptions of Duties and Responsibilities for these positions, enclosed with this newsletter and/or at http://bluemountains.org.au/documents/aboutus/2017duties_and_responsibilities.pdf

Forest therapy in the Blue Mountains

Louise Bennett

"You didn't come into this world.
You came out of it, like a wave from the ocean.
You are not a stranger here."
- Alan Watts

These days, most of us are interested in stress-relief, health and happiness. The quality of life that they bring can't be ignored. In fact, we spend a *staggering* amount of money each year trying to de-stress and feel good. Unfortunately, we usually overlook simple, free ways to reduce stress levels and find peace of mind.

Being an ardent bushwalker and meditator, I was interested when a friend told me about forest therapy (known as forest bathing, *shinrin yoku* in Japanese). Feeling curious but wary, I wondered whether one had to strip off and wade into an icy pond, or stand shivering to death under a waterfall.

After a little research, I found that to practise forest therapy, you can remain fully dressed and dry (so as not to frighten off the wildlife, no doubt!). The practice itself is deceptively simple – just wander *very slowly, without talking* in the forest for at least 20 minutes, looking, listening, taking in scents, and just 'being there' without any effort. It's not the same as normal bushwalking or powering along the tracks to get from A to B in the shortest possible time – forest therapy involves *slowing down* and not aiming to cover any specific distance.

It takes a short while for the busy mind to settle and experience the therapeutic effects of forest therapy. But it's worth it when you look at the benefits.

Forest therapy benefits at a glance

Forest therapy took root (pun intended) in Japan, entering the Japanese healthcare system in 1982. It's been extensively researched over the years, and there's an impressive list of benefits based on clinical studies, including:

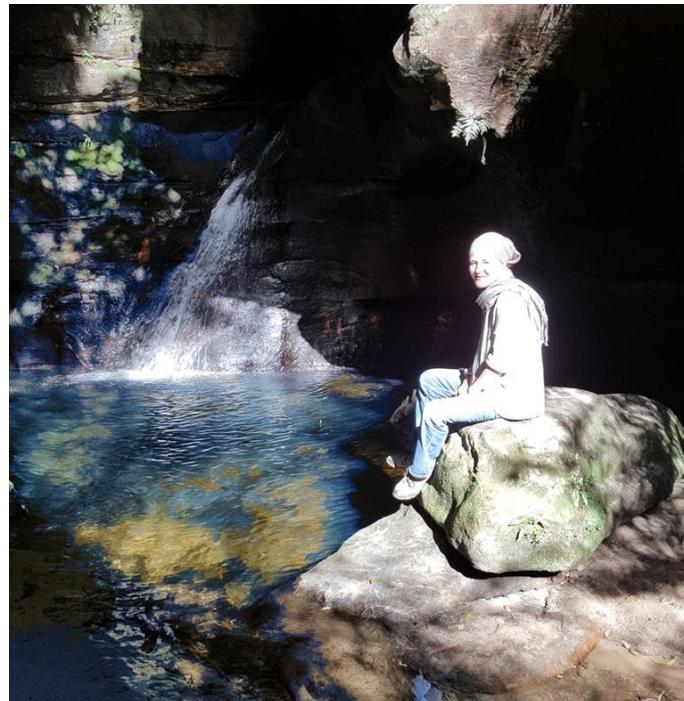
- Marked stress reduction
- Relief from anxiety and depression
- Reduction of high blood pressure
- Relief from insomnia
- Improved cardiovascular function
- Strengthened immune system

MISDIRECTED ENERGY Don Morison

Scarcely a day goes by without another attempted political point score in the great debate about renewable energy, so-called "clean coal", power prices and the ever-fascinating issue of who or what to blame every time anything appears to go wrong.

Across Australia, the worst misdirection in the energy debate recently is occurring because renewable energy is now a political football in the vicious conflict between ultra conservatives and moderates for control of Australia's right-wing political parties. It was heartening when, in mid-February, an alliance of 18 organisations from industry, conservation and other sectors appealed to politicians to take the petty politics out of the energy debate.

Nevertheless, we face a great struggle to restore common sense and scientific fact as the foundations of Australia's energy choices. Too many existing and wannabe



Yoshifumi Miyazaki (director of the Centre for Environment Health and Field Sciences at Chiba University, Japan) has conducted extensive studies into the health benefits of forest therapy.

One study he conducted on 260 people at 24 sites in 2005 and 2006 found that the average concentration of **salivary cortisol**, a stress hormone, in people who gazed on forest scenery for 20 minutes was 13.4 percent lower than that of people in urban settings.*

More on forest therapy in the next issue, but right now, I'm off for a slow walk in the forest.

* http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2008/05/02/national/forest-therapy-taking-root/#.WKUr-n_He13

Photo by Author: Pool of Asmodeus, Valley of the Waters

politicians see their futures in the populist trashing of science and logical analysis.

It was very good on a recent trip from our own Central Tablelands to the Australian Capital Territory to notice windfarms and solar panel farms in greater numbers than ever before (see Blue Trail, page 11). It's going to take a lot of media releases, letters to editors, open-line calls, social media communications and so on to turn the discussion about energy sources in the right direction, but it is well worth doing.

EVENTS COORDINATOR WANTED

The Society needs an Events Coordinator—can you help?

- Chairs the Events Subcommittee
- Organises and runs general meetings and special events
- Mobilises volunteers to assist the role

The Sustainable Home, by Gary McCue and Alex Bergmann

Solar Hot Water Considerations - Part 1

Studies by the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage show 31% of electricity consumption in a typical three person household in Western Sydney is used to heat hot water, more than heating (11.9%), cooling (3.4%) and refrigeration (13.7%) combined (see Electricity Consumption pie chart, Hut News issue 344). If your home has an aging electric (or gas) hot water storage tank, installing a solar hot water system is one of the easiest ways to reduce your power bills and your carbon footprint.

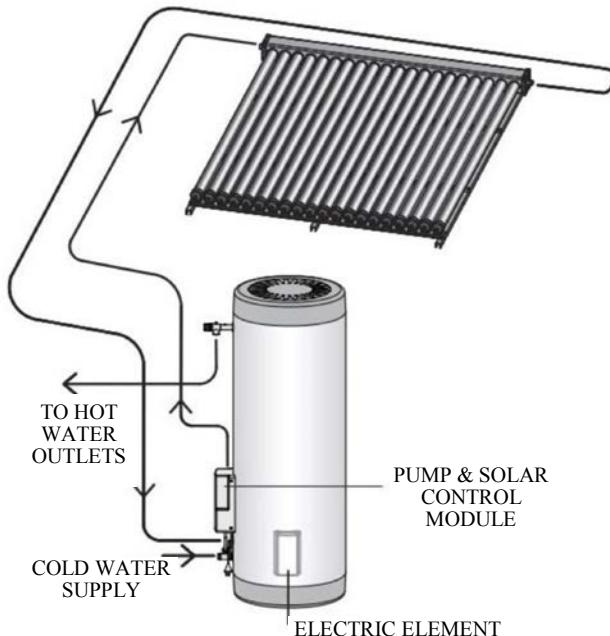
Australia was introduced to domestic solar hot water in the 1950s with Solahart's iconic chrome rooftop storage tanks and flat plate hot water collectors. These "thermosiphon" systems don't require a pump; hot water naturally rises from the collectors to the tank. Although the flat plate design works well, roof structures must be strong enough to bear the weight of a rooftop tank, efficiency falls in winter or on cloudy days, and frost protection may rely upon dumping water from the panels to prevent burst pipes. Over the past fifteen years a more efficient solar hot water design that works significantly better in winter or on cloudy days without a rooftop tank has become the standard in Australia, particularly in the Blue Mountains and other areas that experience frosts: "split system" evacuated tube solar hot water collectors.

Evacuated tube collectors have long, strong, double-layered borosilicate glass tubes encasing an insulating vacuum. Acting like a glass thermos flask with a curved surface that maximises solar absorption as the sun moves, the collector tubes utilise either an internal heatpipe attached to a manifold at the top of the collector for heating water, or have a long U-shaped copper pipe to heat water inside the glass tube. Instead of a rooftop storage tank, evacuated tube collectors are a split system with a ground level tank. Heat sensors connected to a pump controller engage the pump to circulate heated water from the collectors into the tank and draw cold water to the rooftop to be heated. When winter air temperatures fall below 6C, the collector sensor initiates the pump to briefly circulate water through the system to prevent freezing, rather than dumping water from the collectors.

Compound Parabolic Concentrator (CPC) evacuated tube collectors are a recent innovation utilising a shiny parabolic reflector behind the evacuated tubes, increasing the efficiency of the solar hot water collector by using 90% of each tube's surface area with minimal extra cost. However the Australian market has been slow to adapt this simple design improvement.

A third low energy/low carbon hot water option is a heat pump water heater. The storage tank has a heat exchange unit that draws heat from outdoor air to heat water with remarkable efficiencies approaching 450%, though this figure drops as outside air temperatures approach -5C. While the cost of operation is higher than solar hot water boosted with electricity, a heat pump uses significantly less energy compared to an electric storage tank and is an ideal "green" alternative when rooftop solar options are not practical.

Boosting hot water on cloudy days, system location and sizing, and payback period will be discussed in the next issue.



A "split system" evacuated tube solar hot water collector with a ground mounted storage tank and an electric element for boosting hot water on cloudy days. When water has been heated by the collector tubes, heat sensors engage the pump to circulate hot water down to the storage tank and draw cold water to the rooftop collector to be heated.

This column is by local solar experts Gary McCue, with the Sustainability Guys in Blackheath, and Alex Bergmann with Energywise Living in Katoomba. Future columns will address adding battery storage to your solar panels, solar hot water choices and other sustainable home topics.

MAKING POPULATION UNSUSTAINABLE

A former Secretary of the Australian Treasury has made a speech to the Committee for Economic Development of Australia that throws a new light on the plans for the intense development of Greater Western Sydney. Ken Henry is quoted by the Sydney Morning Herald (25/2/17) as saying "On the basis of official projections of Australia's population growth, our governments could be calling tenders for the design of a brand-new city the size of Sydney or Melbourne every decade; or a brand new city the size of Newcastle or Canberra every year ... Instead, they have decided that another 3 million people will be tacked on to Sydney and another 4 million on to Melbourne over the next 40 years."

This starkly underlines the unsustainability of population growth that our State and Federal Governments currently contemplate. Greater Western Sydney is an entirely unsuitable region for the rapid addition of 3 million people. Bigger is not always better with cities and the environmental, employment and congestion problems affecting Western Sydney and the Blue Mountains with our existing population will severely worsen.

The rapid growth and "aerotropolis" strategies now envisaged by government are just playing into the hands of developers who want to sell off crowded homes in air pollution, bushfire and extreme heat threatened areas for the maximum possible profit.

All environment groups need to campaign for more sensible population targets and a more responsible and socially interventionist approach by government in deciding what parts of Australia are genuinely suitable for any population growth.

Don Morison.



Date set for Clarence mine waste collapse prosecution Madi Maclean

Hearing dates of 8 to 10 May have finally been set for the prosecution of Centennial Coal over the huge mine waste collapse from its Clarence colliery back in July 2015. Tonnes of toxic mine waste flowed from the mine site into a channel and then into the Wollangambe River headwaters where it turned into a black sticky sludge. The Wollangambe is a wild river which flows through the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area. It is well known to walkers and canyoneers.

There are two prosecutions by the NSW Office of the Environment being heard together. One relates to the pollution to the river from the mine waste heap collapse into a channel and into Wollangambe River and the other relating to the damage caused by the waste once it entered the national park and the world heritage area.

Photo below: Clarence mine coal waste showing collapsed area.

Read related articles: Springvale mine seeking to weaken pollution reduction (page 3); EPA raises serious concerns over Invincible Mine Southern extension (page 4); Appeal against decision on protecting Sydney's water supply (page 3)



Mine pollution levels among worst in the world

Since the 1980s the operators of Clarence Colliery have been allowed to discharge mine waste into the Wollangambe River under its environmental licence.

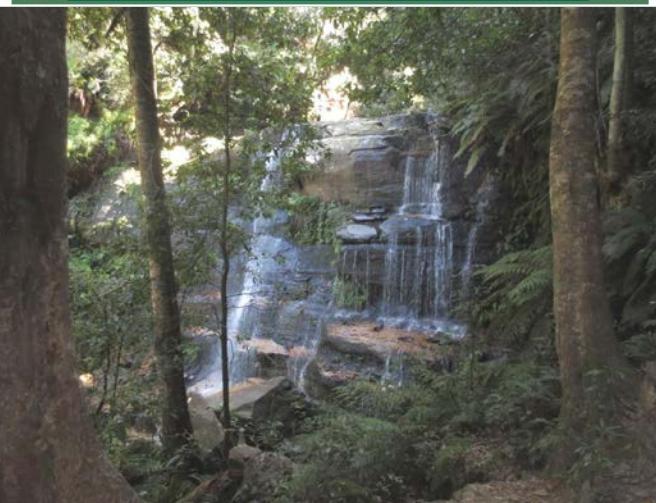
For the past five years, a team from Western Sydney University led by Dr Ian Wright has been studying the effect of the Clarence Colliery on the river, which runs deep within the Wollemi National Park.

In an ABC News report (26/2/17) Dr Wright said they discovered pollution, not just at the discharge point, but 22 kilometres downstream, right in the heart of the World Heritage Area. The team discovered high levels of salt and metals like nickel and zinc when they compared the river downstream of the discharge point to tributaries and waterways located metres away, as well as the river above the discharge point.

Dr Wright says this contamination has had a major impact on invertebrate species in the water. These animals are an important part of the food chain and their absence affects all the animals, such as platypus and birds, which would normally feed on them. Dr Wright describes parts of the river as an "ecological desert".

The Environment Protection Authority (EPA) needs to now introduce tighter conditions including upper limits to control all the identified pollutants. The conditions need to meet Australian water quality guidelines as outlined in the UWS study.

Poets' Corner



THE PASS.

I have walked the Pass so many times,
Bewitched, beguiled I'm sure.
Like coming home, a friendly place,
Those steps my secret door.

Submerging in the green abyss,
Embraced in Nature's arms.
Familiar, though each time anew,
Each time that blissful calm.

The sound of tumbling water
Makes music to the ear.
The splash, the spray, the shower,
The sparkling stream so clear.

The forest giants stand silent,
A carpet on the land.
This sea of life, of every form,
Of Nature's hand, not man's.

To sit awhile and contemplate.
Walkers rushing by.
Life is in this moment now,
And Life is lived as moments fly.

Ross Bridle.

Readers of Hut News are invited to send a poem inspired by the Blue Mountains, maximum of 20 lines. Poems can be emailed to Brendan Doyle brendan049@gmail.com or posted to Poets' Corner at 5 Lurline Street, Wentworth Falls 2782.

BMCS Planning and Development Resource Kit

Do you want to take action on an environmental issue in your neighbourhood or the Blue Mountains more broadly?
Do you want information about the laws and procedures relating to development and environmental protection?
Find out what **YOU** can do! Go to the Planning and Development Resource Kit www.bluemountains.org.au/pdrk>Welcome.shtml

HUT NEWS PHOTOS—the best of both worlds!

Members receive a hard copy of Hut News by post, unless requested otherwise. Some members say that they prefer reading the newsletter at leisure in B&W and then view the photos in colour on our website www.bluemountains.org.au

Henry Lawson in the Blue Mountains

2017 is the sesquicentennial of Henry Lawson's birth. Throughout this year, in Hut News, we will reproduce some of Henry Lawson's poetry and other writings. In "Grandfather's Courtship" and "The Mountains Splitter" Henry wrote about his maternal grandfather, Henry Albury.

"Grandfather's Courtship" by Henry Lawson (1912) – some extracts.

Grandfather was camping, as caretaker, in an old mountain residence near Mount Victoria, at the head of a rugged gully that went deeper and deeper until it tumbled into the wonderful Grose Valley – or Gorge. He was getting stringybark palings and posts and rails out of mountain-ash, and other trees that were not stringybark, for the good people of the then thriving township of Mount Victoria, whose knowledge of timber was limited, but whose confidence in Grandfather was not.

... there were wonderful hidden and unsuspected camping nooks and caves and waterfalls and game haunts in the mountains, known only to Grandfather, and what he didn't know about timber or the things that lived in it, no other man on the mountain districts knew. Also he had been a pioneer on the Western and Mudgee roads in the Bush-ranging and Gold Rush Days; and he could tell tales of the old days, and the blacks, and sing the songs of both.

... It was Christmas Eve. The others had gone to the roller skating rink on the Mount, and Grandfather and I were by ourselves. It had been a strenuous day, and we were resting, after helping Grandfather to hump the last of his year's palings out of the gully's head, and carry things up from one of his country residences – a cave this time, where we boys had camped last night on our way up from the Grose.

... It had turned chilly, not to say cold; and later on it turned very cold; as the weather changes suddenly on the Mountains. Mount Victoria, by the way, was the first place I ever crouched over the fire on Christmas Day and saw snow in midsummer in Australia. Valley and gorge and gully and basin were buried to the cliff edges in a level sea of the whitest fog, and the Mount seemed sailing in the clearest and brightest moonlight above the clouds

Rubbish Pickup Ross Coster

Did you ever see an environmental problem and think "that needs fixing; I wish somebody would fix that"? Maybe that somebody should be you?

Every morning my wife Heather and I walk our two little dogs. We pick up after them of course (as all good dog owners should), which means we need to carry a plastic bag.

One morning I saw some litter near Glenbrook Lagoon and decided that, rather than leave it there for someone else to pick up, I would do it myself.

As with all such good ideas, this has snowballed into a daily task. I now take two plastic bags, one for recyclables, one for rubbish, plus Heather has bought me a litter claw to make pickup easier. The morning walk usually yields a bag of recycling as well as a bag of rubbish, every day, just around Glenbrook.

Perhaps you can join me in my new hobby? Litter claws are about \$20 at a hardware store, plastic bags come free with your shopping if you ask, most of us have room in our bins for the recycling and rubbish, and a walk around the neighbourhood is always good for us.

Help Clean Up Australia, not on one day per year, but every day of the year!

THE MOUNTAIN SPLITTER, by Henry Lawson
(Town and Country Journal, April 1889)

He works in the glen where the waratah grows,
And the gums and the ashes are tall,
'Neath cliffs that re-echo the sound of his blows
When the wedges leap in from the maw.

He comes of a hardy old immigrant race,
And he feels not the rain nor the drouth.
His sinews are tougher than wire; and his face
Has been tanned by the sun of the south.

Now doomed to be shorn of its glory at last
Is the stately old tree he attacks;
Its moments of life he is numbering fast
With the keen steady strokes of his axe.

Loud cracks at the butt; and the strong wood is burst;
And the splitter steps backward, and turns
His eyes to the boughs that move slowly at first
Ere they rush to their grave in the ferns.

He strips off the bark with slight effort of strength
And stretches it out on the weeds,
And marks off the trunk with a measure the length
Of the rails or the palings he needs.

The teeth of his crosscut so truly are set
That it swings from his elbow at ease;
And the song of the saw – I am hearing it yet –
Has the music of wind in the trees.

Strong blows on the wedge, and a rip and a tear,
And the log opens up to the butt;
And, spreading around through the pure mountain air,
Is the scent of the wood newly cut.

A lover of comfort and cronies is he;
And when the day's work is behind,
A fire, and a yarn, and a billy of tea,
At the hut of the splitter you'll find.

His custom is sought in the town by the range;
For well to the future he looks;
His cheques in an instant the storekeepers change;
And his name is the best on the books.





The Recycled Bird Bath

Jim Low

There is a healthy tradition of improvisation in Australia. Have a dig around an old farm house or barn. The unique objects you are bound to discover bear testament to the ingenuity of this practice born of necessity. Improvisation depends heavily on the imagination to see the possibility of recycling materials to meet other needs. It also requires the ability to accomplish the transformation.

My father was an inventor and, whenever it was possible, he resourcefully recycled materials. A lot of the wood he used for his projects came from timber packing cases put out for the garbage collection in the narrow laneway near his Sydney office and workrooms. In the school holidays my brother and I used to love going into town and visiting him. His workplace was like a bowerbird's nest, crammed with all sorts of interesting bits and pieces. My father did not like throwing things away. He seemed to hold secretly to the belief that he was bound, sooner or later, to find a use for these odds and ends. Thus, toothpaste lids were transformed into excellent drawer handles with the turn of a screw. His workbench stool was an upended Oldsmobile axle, to which he had attached a foam rubber seat.

I kept this axle, continuing its use as a stool until it became too uncomfortable. But I could not throw it away. Thankfully I didn't, for some years ago I gave it a new lease of life in my garden. Standing on a cement paver, while balancing a pot base, the axle serves as a purposeful bird bath. I reckon my Dad would be very pleased with this outcome. The birds that visit the garden seem delighted as well.

Editor: What an excellent use for the old car axle! Hut News readers are invited to send stories and photos of their recycling ideas to the Newsletter Editor, hutnews@bluemountains.org.au



BMCS NURSERY PLANT SALES

We offer the home gardener, landscaper or contractor a big variety of quality local native plants at economical prices.

Plants can be purchased at:

Blackheath Community Market, 1st Sunday of the month at Blackheath Public School, 9am to 1pm

Magpie Market, 3rd Sunday of month at Lawson Public School, 9am to 2pm

Tube stock \$3. Discounts for bulk orders.

Enquiries Sue Nicol 4787 8887 nursery@bluemountains.org.au

You can become a member of Blue Mountains Conservation Society

- Post this Application Form with your cheque or money order to: Blue Mountains Conservation Society, PO Box 29, Wentworth Falls, NSW 2782, OR
- Join online at: www.bluemountains.org.au

(Use capitals please—even for email address)

Name(s) 1.

2.

3.

Address: PC

Phone(s)

Email

I/We agree to support the aims and objectives of the Society as set out on reverse side of this membership application:

Please sign if named above.

Signature(s) 1.

2.

3.

MEMBERSHIP FEES (please circle one item)

Single \$35 Concession (Senior/Student)\$25

Household \$40 Household Concession \$30

Corporate (negotiable)

Membership (circled above) \$

Donation (tax deductible) \$

Bushwalkers: please add

\$20 per walker per annum. \$

TOTAL AMOUNT \$

Send my copy of Hut News by

Please tick box mail internet only

Would you like to be involved in any of the following activities or working groups? (Please underline):

Land use/development issues; Environmental Education; Threatened species issues; Website and social media; Plant nursery assistance; Bushcare; Publicity/photography; Water quality/sourcing studies; Administration;

ENQUIRIES: Phone 02 4757 1872

Email: membership@bluemountains.org.au

A BEQUEST: Please remember us in your Will.

The Law Society of NSW recommends the following wording: "I bequeath the sum of \$... to the Blue Mountains Conservation Society Inc. for its general purposes and declare that the receipt of the treasurer for the time being of the Blue Mountains Conservation Society shall be complete discharge to my executors in respect of any sum paid to the Blue Mountains Conservation Society".

BLUE MOUNTAINS CONSERVATION SOCIETY

Blue Mountains Conservation Society is a community organisation working to achieve the preservation and regeneration of the natural environment of the Greater Blue Mountains.

The Society believes that World Heritage status provides an opportunity for local community members to become custodians of the unique biodiversity and scenery of the Blue Mountains.

The Mission of the Society is to help conserve the natural environment of the Blue Mountains.

The Aims and Objectives of the Society are to:

- Disseminate and foster an understanding of the ideals of Conservation.
- Promote the need for ecological sustainability.
- Protect the natural environment—flora, fauna, habitat, water, land and air.
- Actively oppose those human activities which degrade or destroy the natural environment.
- Repair the adverse effects of human activities upon the environment.
- Encourage the love of the natural environment by conducting a regular program of bushwalks.
- Increase the pool of expert knowledge about the natural environment, through meetings, excursions, research and other activities.
- Provide information to the public on matters of Conservation, especially through the Conservation Hut at the Valley of the Waters, Wentworth Falls.
- Maintain close and friendly relations with like-minded groups.

Welcome to new members

Tony Hickey
Paul Hannah
Jim Carothers

VALLEY OF THE WATERS BUSHCARE GROUP

The Valley of the Waters Bushcare Group meets on the **second Saturday of each month, 9am - noon.**

Tools and gloves are available. Bring a drink, a snack and a sunhat.

NEW MEMBERS ARE WELCOME.

Phone Karen 4757 1929.



A weed is a weed is a weed ...

A weed is not just a plant growing in the wrong location. It takes the place of indigenous plants and destroys native habitats.

In late February, Bushcare Officer Paul Vale reported that he had spent most of a day removing the heads of Agapanthus from around and in the Popes Glen Reserve at Blackheath. Good on you, Paul!

Many other garden plants have spread as weeds into our bushland reserves and National Parks. Nursery Manager Sue Nicol mentioned *Montbretia* which seems to have extremely efficient reproductive strategies like the Agapanthus and has been established longer. *Montbretia* finds its way to the bank of a stream and becomes thicker and heavier until the bank collapses – disastrous for our waterways. The resulting debris carries with it propagules to establish a new colony downstream.

In many cases, homesick migrants came to Australia and introduced familiar plants from their homeland. Attractive, harmless and even useful in their country of origin, so many of these plants have run wild and are a threat to Australia's unique flora and fauna.

Holly and ivy are associated with Christmas in a Christmas carol.

The holly and the ivy,
When they are both full grown,
Of all trees that are in the wood,
The holly bears the crown.

And the dreaded Broom (*Cytisus scoparius*) is venerated in a traditional Scottish love ballad, "The Broom o' the Cowdenknowes".

O the broom, the bonnie, bonnie broom
The broom o the Cowdenknowes
Fain would I be in the north country
Herding her father's ewes

Some native plants from other parts of Australia have become environmental weeds in the Blue Mountains. John Williamson sang about Cootamundra Wattle:

Hey it's July and the winter sun is shining
And the Cootamundra wattle is my friend
For all at once my childhood never left me
'Cause wattle blossoms bring it back again

Cootamundra Wattle (*Acacia baileyana*) is indigenous to a small area of southern New South Wales, but has become naturalized and regarded as a weed in other areas of Australia. In the Blue Mountains we have our own beautiful wattles including the Sunshine Wattle (*Acacia terminalis*) which lights up the bushland in the winter months, and Sydney Golden Wattle (*Acacia longifolia*) with an abundance of golden flowers in late winter and spring. Let's have some songs about them!

The Agapanthus, from South Africa, is very easy to grow, needs little attention and, once established, is very difficult to remove – that should be a warning of its weed potential, and we should have known better by now than to introduce a new weed.

Go to Blue Mountains City Council's website or contact Council for more information about noxious and environmental weeds in the Blue Mountains <http://www.bmcc.nsw.gov.au/sustainableliving/weedmanagement/factsheets/>

Christine Davies. (Graphic by clipart.co)

BLUE MOUNTAINS CONSERVATION SOCIETY

www.bluemountains.org.au

'Like' us on Facebook:

Blue Mountains Conservation Society

Follow us on Twitter: bmcsnsw



33. RENEWABLE ENERGY FARMS, Taralga and southwards

The Greater Blue Mountains is part of south-east Australia's tablelands, excellent for alternative energy. You don't have to venture too far afield to notice that wind and sunshine are plentiful enough in the high country for wind and solar farms.

There are only two wind turbines at Hampton on the Jenolan Caves Road but, once Taralga is reached, multitudinous clusters of the turbines are visible. A tour of the countryside to the south and west reveals many more. Although a small "no wind turbines" placard was in evidence on an upmarket property at the tiny village of Roslyn, the scale of the countryside generally allows the wind farms to blend in well. It's a particular shame that former Australian treasurer, Joe Hockey, who always found the structures near Lake George so noticeable, has been in Washington during the period Lake George has begun to refill with water. Mr Hockey and anyone else who appreciates the synchronicity of natural and cultural landscapes would be struck by the turbines' aesthetics, from the elevated lookout on the Federal Highway.

The Australian Capital Territory's 100% renewable energy target is significant to renewables' expansion. Royalla Solar Farm (83,000 photovoltaic cells) along with Mugga Lane (53,000) and Williamsdale (35,000) will power more than 10,000 homes between them. The wind and solar farms are in locations that avoid clashing with the region's natural beauty. An amount of landscaping will also occur around the solar farms.



Following Australia's support for the Paris climate change targets, expansion of renewable energy installations along the tablelands makes good sense.

34. BLACK RANGE, Jenolan State Forest

The walk along the Six Foot Track from Katoomba to Jenolan Caves traverses diverse Blue Mountains landscapes. There are agriculture-affected areas between the Coxs River and Mini Mini Saddle and pine forests near the Jenolan Caves Road. But, on the sometimes chilly and forlorn heights of the Black Range, nature reasserts itself.

Near the track's crossing of the Caves Road, ribbon gums of all ages provide a thick cover with an understorey of Lomandra below. The occasional skeleton of a native animal can be seen nestling in the sandy soil.

When the Blue Mountains poet, Harry Peckman, guided Lord and Lady Carrington along the track, the gubernatorial couple had sturdy horses to carry them. But, to really appreciate the trip, shanks pony is the best transport.

Images:

Wind farm viewed from near the site of the old Taralga railway station. Photo by Don Morison.

Some of the 83,000 panels at Royalla Solar Farm. Photo by Christine Davies

The Six Foot Track at Black Range. Photo by Christine Davies.

This "Blue Trail" is a collective description for sites in the western Blue Mountains that arouse natural or cultural interest or both. Most are only a short walk from roads or vehicular tracks. One day, a high quality walking path may link them.



BLUE MOUNTAINS CONSERVATION SOCIETY Inc: BUSHWALKING ACTIVITIES

Membership of the bushwalking group is open to Society members. The BMCS Bushwalking Guide which explains the numbered grades can be found on the Society's website www.bluemountains.org.au or can be posted on request. For more information call Maurice Kerkham 4739 4942, mobile 04024 02783, email mauricekerkham@hotmail.com or write to PO Box 29, Wentworth Falls 2782. **Late changes to the program will be published on the website.**

SATURDAY WALKS: Usually a full day longer walk at a faster pace. Bring morning tea, lunch and adequate water. If you are a new walker to Saturday walks, before attending contact the designated contact person or the Group Co-ordinator Harold Thompson harold.thompson@bigpond.com 6355 1762 or mobile 0409 010 737

Saturday Walks driver reimbursement: *In an effort to ensure that car drivers are adequately compensated for the use of their vehicles a driver reimbursement policy applies* (Check www.bluemountains.org.au Saturday Walks page for details)

Mar 18 **Glowworm Tunnel Circuit.** There will be a creek crossing (wet feet) and bring a torch for the tunnel. Leader Mike 47573660. Meet Mt Vic Station CP 8.30. 10k. Grade 3. Map Ben Bullen.

Mar 25 **Devils Hole via Nellies Glen.** Leader Eddie. 4784 2691. Meet at Katoomba Stn CP 8.00. 13km. Grade 3. Map Katoomba.

Apr 1 Gardens of Stone. A new adventure of discovery – off track, part exploratory wilderness area so party size limited. Dependent on 4WD availability. Book early. 5km, Gr 3. May be scratchy so protective clothing necessary. Leader: Hugh hue.s@optusnet.com.au 0423 309 854 after 8pm. **Walkers preferring on-track/longer walk should meet at Glenbrook Stn. CP at 8.00am, choose a walk and leader on the day.**

Apr 8 **Turpentine Walk.** Leader **Bob 0408 947 325.** Meet Woodford Stn south 8.30am. 8km. Grade 3. Map Jamison/Penrith

Apr 15 **Burra Korain.** Leader Harold 0409010737. Meet Blackheath Stn Car Park 8.30am. 13km. Grade 3-4. Map Mt Wilson

MONDAY LEISURE WALKS: Short Day walks of 3-5 hours, suitable for walkers of an average fitness. Bring morning tea and lunch and adequate water. The Group Co-ordinator is Keith Dorrian, 4736 1010, 04111 62345, keithdor53@hotmail.com

Mar 13 **Martins Lookout to Lost World, Springwood.** Steep climb down and up, 6 km. Great views. Meet Springwood Station car park 8.15 am. Car pool fare \$4. Ros King 0417 261 465. Grade 3.

Mar 20 **Greenwich Pt Harbour Circuit walk.** Meet top of escalators, Central Station, 9.30 am. Maurice 4739 4942 or 0402 402 783. Grade 2.

Mar 27 **Radiata Plateau Mt Elphinstone, Katoomba.** Great views into Megalong Valley. Meet Katoomba Station car park 8.30 am. Car pool. Liz Stark 4754 4966. Grade 2.

Apr 3 **Burramatta Falls, Kurrajong Heights.** Meet Springwood Station car park 8.15 am. Car pool fare \$7. Maurice 4739 4942 or 0402 402 783. Grade 2.

Apr 10 **Popes Glen to Pulpit Rock, Blackheath.** Meet Blackheath Neighbourhood Centre 9.40 am. Tracy 0434 362 611. Grade 3.

THURSDAY PLEASURE WALKS: Walks 2-3 hours conducted at a leisurely pace to suit walkers on the day. Bring morning tea, adequate water and lunch if noted. Group Co-ordinator is Beverley Thompson, 4757 2076, denfenella12@bigpond.com

Mar 16 **Fort Rock, Blackheath.** Meet Blackheath Neighbourhood Centre 8.45am. Leader Beverley 4757 2076. Car pool. Take lunch. Grade 2

Mar 23 **Victoria Falls, Mount Victoria.** Meet Mount Victoria Station 8.45am. Leader Tracy 0434 362 611. Car pool. Take lunch. Grade 3

Mar 30 **Pulpit Rock to Horseshoe Falls and return, Blackheath.** Meet Blackheath Neighbourhood Centre 8.45am. Leader Tracy 0434 362 611. Car pool. Take lunch. Grade 2

Apr 6 **Circular Walk to Adam's Lookout, Hazelbrook.** Meet Hazelbrook Station Car Park, south side 8.45am. Leader Beverley. Car pool. Take lunch. Grade 2

Apr 13 **Dam Buster Bus Trip—3 dams, Cordeaux, Nepean, Warragamba.** Short walks, lovely views, interesting sites. Book and pay Tracy 0434 362 611 Meet Springwood Car Park, behind Westpac Bank. 8.00am. Leader Tracy 0434 362 611. Take lunch. Grade 1

Sunset, music and mingling at the Conservation Hut

At our Sunset Get-together on Thursday 23 February - it was a beautiful evening with some clouds in the sky and a lovely sunset.

Tara Cameron opened the meeting and introduced Don Morison who spoke briefly about the history of the Society and some of our campaigns and other activities. Tara spoke about the roles members can take to help the Society's work, including our Gardens of Stone and Western Escarpment campaigns. Sue Nicol spoke about the native plant nursery. Carolyn Williams and Paul Vale spoke about the work of the Land Use Subcommittee.

We gathered on the deck of the Conservation Hut to watch the sun setting over the beautiful cliffs and valleys of the

Blue Mountains.

Singer/songwriters Alan Foster and Jim Low entertained us. Alan sang a song by Henry Lawson and two of his own compositions. Jim sang three of his own songs, including one about "Mary" and "Joe", their names engraved on plaques in beautiful places and their memories connected by Jim in his February 2017 Hut News article.

It was a friendly and relaxed gathering, an opportunity for members to find out more about the Society and to meet and talk during a leisurely supper. A member suggested we do this more often. Hear, hear!

Lots of wonderful photos and walk descriptions: <https://www.facebook.com/bmcslongerbushwalks/>